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Convocation Address

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Dean A.J. Klein
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The State University

Mr. President, members of the graduating classes. May I address the rest of you as innocent bystanders in the hope that if my attack on the graduates misses them, it may still hit someone.

I wish to talk about the state university, not this University ~~or even the five State Universities of Ohio~~, but the state university as a type of higher educational institution developed in the United States to serve as one of the agents of a public policy distinctive to our democracy. I wish to emphasize the nature and wide range of its functions and responsibilities, and on the other hand, ^{to} make as personal as I can your own responsibility to the ideas and purposes that characterize the state university and distinguish it from other institutions of higher education.

It is probably safe to assume that few of you have devoted much time to this subject. Indeed, I'd probably not be offensively derogatory of your intellectual activities if I assumed that your thoughts about the Ohio State University itself, as an institution, have not been too profound. If your opinions are like those that I have found among students and graduates of practically all the State Universities of the United States, the generalizations you make about your own State University are about as follows:

First, the University is a place, a campus with buildings. This idea is so strong that a great many ~~faculty~~ people ~~and others~~ think that work done by the University away from these sacred acres must, of necessity, smack of inferiority, and be less savory in the nostrils of scholars.

Second, the University is an institution with a football team. This gives you a reason to get out and yell for the University. To paraphrase the words of a distinguished president on the shores of Lake Michigan, this doesn't seem a major excuse for the University's existence ^{— especially} to those of us who never feel any need for exercise that going to bed won't cure!

Third, you think of the University as personified and personalized by the president, the big boss, the man who settles everything from cafeteria hours to educational philosophy. Sometimes, but rarely, presidents share this view!

Fourth, you think of the University as a kind of department store, stocking educational goods that you can use in making a living, attaining social standing, or getting married. Some of you may have been terribly annoyed that the University's goods come in mixed lots (called curricula) and that it operates like the blackmarket. You have to take the shredded wheat and shoe polish in order to get the sugar and the bacon!!

If these estimates of your opinions are unjust and incomplete, please forgive the distortion. The fact probably remains that your ideas about the University have been personal and opportunistic, rather than statesmanlike, social, or philosophical. In talking about the state university as a type of institution, therefore, we may profitably start from where we are.

At the close of these exercises, just before the benediction, a representative of the Ohio State University Alumni Association will present you with a year's membership -- cash value three dollars. A cynic would say that this is a suitable gift to mark the end of the time when you can expect to receive something for nothing from the

University. You may suspect that the three dollar membership is the old "come-on" salesmanship that offers something free in the hope that more profitable business may later be done. You are wrong to entertain such suspicions -- that three dollars is more like the postage stamp on a letter reminding you that you are debtors to the society that established and operates the public schools of Ohio. The debt is to society, not essentially or primarily to the University. The University is merely one of the many stations through which you may contribute loyalty and service to the society of which you are a part. Has your experience in this State University developed a loyalty that can be interpreted and practiced in these terms?

This brings us back to the State University as one of the agents of a public policy distinctive to our democracy.

Anyone at all familiar with our history knows that concern for education as essential to the development and preservation of our national way of life, showed itself early in the establishment of the free grammar school and in grants of public land for educational purposes. The institutional embodiment of this public policy was, until about 1850, largely confined to the grammar school. It was not until well after 1850 that the growing complexity of our economic and social life made necessary the almost universal addition of the public high school as a further institutionalizing of our long time educational policy. With the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862 vigorous impetus was given to the development of the ^{Land Grant} State University and by 1900 this third major step in giving our public educational

policy institutional implementation had covered the nation.

The State University is thus one agency of our public school system, a system that, in all its parts, was developed as the expression of our national concern for the economic competence of our people and for the processes and values involved in our living together as a democratic nation. No where else in the world has there been a more magnificent vision of the material and spiritual resources inherent in the people or a more practical method devised for developing and bringing these resources into flower among all the people. The vision and the means are justified by the result.

As we recall the catalogues of the University, as we look over the program of this convocation, and as we note the distinctive colors of those little tassels that adorn the mortar boards on your heads, we see doctors, dentists, veterinarians, and teachers, musicians, artists, and psychologists, druggists, nurses, agriculturists, (among them some farmers) accountants, retailers, lawyers, physicists, chemists, historians, and so on in great variety. When we look at the organization of the University itself we see a great number of colleges and departments, each keenly devoted to the production of one or more kinds of highly trained workers necessary to the life of the world.

No one can be conscious of these facts and believe that the state university is cloistered, remote, withdrawn -- an otherworldly institution indifferent to or contemptuous of the practical everyday needs of men. Rather, it is clearly the source and creator of the human and intellectual materials and skills that society uses in the most significant and vital aspects of its structure and activities. To

this extent, at any rate, the state university is true to the public policy that established it as one of the agents of national preservation and development.

~~But~~ The great variety of educational services to which the state university is dedicated is not confined to a relatively narrow range of conventional and well established professional and academic fields as is the case with many other splendid institutions. Other higher institutions may very properly limit their activities to one or two or a few of the deep-seated and significant educational interests of the academic world; they may serve their most useful central purpose by intensive cultivation of some of the fields of man's intellectual heritage. The state university cannot think of itself as the preserver of a heritage; it must think of itself chiefly as the creator of a new heritage, or, in the words of David Kinley, as the developmental arm of society. The state university can not define itself in terms of a few select interests; its ambition must ~~be~~ ^{constantly} be the whole range of man's activities that may be served by intellectual development and application. If the state university is to serve the purposes for which it is maintained by the public, it must ~~be~~ ^{constantly} ~~constantly~~ exploring the contemporary social scene to discover new areas and activities that demand intellectual organization and creative treatment. It must cherish its right and obligation to undertake work in fields that are not academically and traditionally respectable among other higher institutions.

The history of the state university is full of examples of such pioneering service to education and society. Need I mention the introduction into higher education's family circle of agriculture and engineering, of commerce, veterinary medicine, education, and home

economics, or, more recently of social administration, nursing and occupational therapy. Few realize, however, that science itself did not become a respectable and accepted child of university programs until after 1875 when the land-grant universities were experiencing their most vigorous development. They were in the forefront of the bitter fight to break down the classical and ecclesiastical traditions that had dominated higher education.

It is true that the state university has not always been the first to discover and venture into new fields of social and intellectual need, but the state university has been characterized by its hospitality in providing an academic home and vigorous development for areas of man's activities that were regarded with supercilious contempt by the guardians of the citadels of learning.

Any state university that is not cradling three or four academic babies whose parentage is questioned by conventional institutions should become alarmed lest it has stopped going places and is becoming a mere educational treadmill. When this threatens, the public, and this means you, should individually and through voluntary and governmental organizations raise vigorous voices of protest and insistence, in order that your state university may never lose its concern for and hospitality to the new needs and desires of our ever changing world. The state university is yours; it is not the property of the president, the faculty, the board of trustees, the legislature or of any association of institutions set up to compel conformity to old standards. The state university is the people's and you are the people.

Without the sarcasm that I put into his words, it is true that, 'you are the people and when you die wisdom will die with you.'

The great variety of the activities of the state university, the strong representation of the immediately practical in its program,

the state university's hospitality to fields that are not of accepted academic respectability -- all these things bother and irritate a great many educational traditionalists -- especially those whose major accomplishment in life has been the mastery of an outmoded field of knowledge, or the acquisition of a degree symbolizing the respectabilities of a traditional program. They see their stock in trade threatened by new educational wares. They see the basis for their preeminence undermined by esteem for the new babies and children, born or adopted into the academic family. They are reluctant to reconstruct the perspectives of their own learning in relationship to other purposes. Ten or twelve years ago they welcomed with glad cries a widely read book which contended that ^{there was no place in a university for} agriculture, education, commerce, home economics, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, ^{or for any of} ~~and all the~~ ^{the} other professions and near professions, except law, medicine and training for ^a college professorship. ~~had no place in a university.~~ They were delighted with the viewpoint that the very existence of such interests on the same campus with the traditional professions of law and medicine and with the scholarly pursuit of knowledge for the sake of its own perpetuation, positively contaminated the crystal clear waters of higher education.

The state university and society in general see no such corrupting influence in the existence, side by side in their midst, of activities and programs that cover the entire range of intellectual and social interests from insect extermination to the classical philosophers. On the contrary, the state university sees tremendous values in such proximity, since only thus may the interrelatedness of all knowledge

be realized and full advantage be taken of the contributions that the parts may make to each other -- even the depredations of certain insects may not be unrelated to the restless ^{ness of the} thoughts of the philosopher.

Ladies and gentlemen, during the difficult years that lie immediately ahead we shall ^{bring out into the open and} have to settle the question^f of whether we shall turn the state university over to the affiliated ~~directions~~ of erudition, vested interests, and lack of faith in the common man, or whether we shall pledge ourselves anew to our old public policy of making the state university the developmental agent of an ever growing democracy. Where will you stand? Do you know enough to determine in which of these directions specific educational proposals and actions are leading? If you do not, some of the responsibility rests upon the shoulders of education for specialization ^{that neglects} ~~without~~ social perspectives.

The organization of the university with its specialized departments and colleges and the long list of specialized persons that this organization produces give the impression not solely of a great variety of activities that are of value to society. The impression is also ^{sometimes} ~~one of extraordinary separation of interests and~~ of amazing fragmentation of knowledge and of the processes of living. It is easy, therefore, to think of you, the graduates of this system, as human cogs, cams and levers to be operated in society by some master mind or by a society that is itself an impersonal and inhuman mechanism. Some of you may find satisfaction and contentment in the hope that you are just such cogs admirably suited for such use. Some of you may be pleased that you do not need to make judgments about the values of your work and activities beyond the judgment that

someone, mastermind or social mechanism, is willing to feed, house and clothe you in return for your services. There are many people like the scientist who said it was his business to discover and invent and not to bother about whether what he produced was used for good or bad.

A great many of you, less willing to be the quiescent tools of society have, perhaps, by your almost exclusive association with the professors and students of your own special fields and by intensive intellectual and emotional application to these fields, tended to disqualify yourselves to play informed and creative parts in determining the values that society should seek in its use of your own special competencies and in the use of the special competencies of others. You may lack the knowledge, the wider loyalties ~~and~~ ^{and} perspectives that fit you to play effective and responsible roles in determining the nature of the society in which you and your children shall live.

If the specialized programs prescribed by the University have had this effect and if your lives after graduation continue to be solely preoccupied with your special field of work, with ~~its~~ ~~prosperity and~~ its narrow intellectual and emotional concern, without reference to the wider welfare of society, the state university has failed to serve one aspect of the public policy for which it was created. There are those who maintain that this failure is a fact.

These thoughtful critics believe that the fragmentation and the minute subdivision of the work of the university make it utterly impossible for a student to secure a general view and understanding of the world, to develop perspectives with respect to the world's major activities and problems, that will enable him to manage his

own life ~~and relationships~~ with even a fair degree of intelligence and creative effectiveness in helping to build a better society. Usually this position is taken most earnestly by those who are not charged with education for an occupational career, but who face the problem of trying to construct a program of general education from materials designed for the purpose of selecting and preparing students for lives of academic scholarship. These critics are likely to regard the practical professional and occupational programs of the state university as so many added obstacles to an education that ^{will} give [^] social and cultural perspective. But their concern is increasingly shared by those charged with the education of doctors, ^{engineers,} lawyers, teachers, business administrators and many others whose specific function is that of preparing workers for service outside the academic world. Too frequently they also attempt to solve the problem ~~either~~ by ~~imposing as prerequisites for entering their occupational programs~~ ~~and by~~ liberally peppering these ^{ir} curricula with the same instruments of academic scholarship that prove to be so ~~inappropriate and~~ ineffective in providing ^{wide} ~~cultural~~ perspectives when mixed with each other in complex patterns. ^{for the purpose of general education.} They prove no more effective when mixed with the occupational.

Does this mean that the student preparing for a career as a university professor or research man and the student with less magnificent vocational objectives are both condemned to lives that are at the mercy of social forces which they understand neither factually nor philosophically and which they are incompetent to shape in terms of values that they cherish? Does this mean that the state university must abandon its varied programs of education for the work of the world in order to provide an education devoted exclusively to the business of enabling students to see the world in proper perspective?

The proposals of both these questions seem to me not only unrealistic from the standpoint of the society in which we live ^{from the standpoint of the actual accomplishment of} and ~~which maintains~~ the state university, but they are also psychologically and educationally unsound. The first course is the counsel of despair. The second assumes falsely that there is a pattern of materials and processes that will produce in anyone to whom it is applied a coherent and related view of the world. It neglects the fact of individual differences, that what is one man's meat is another man's poison. Both assume that learning to understand the society in which we live and learning to make a living are necessarily antagonistic and incompatible objectives.

Actually, of course, making a living is for most of us the means of contact and relationship with the wider world and society. Almost inevitably, interest in learning how to earn a livelihood motivates and provides the gateway to wider perspectives, whether the livelihood is that of a research scientist or a retail salesman. This does not mean that education for a scholarly career in the languages ~~or even of the sciences~~ or education as an expert grower of chickens always opens up visions of a larger world. Sometimes it results ~~in narrowing perspectives~~, in digging a small hole deeper until only its walls are visible. The state university is founded upon the conviction that this need not be true; ^{Upon} the determination that in these institutions it shall ~~not~~ be true, and upon the faith that ~~they~~ public will, in the long run, not permit the social purposes ~~for which~~ ^{of} the state university ~~is maintained~~ to be long betrayed. In its service of the practical needs of the individual and of society the state university ~~relates and~~ is obligated to relate every field of its activity to the wider world in which these fields function.

And so, I come to my final point, a very practical one of dollars and cents. It may be recognized that the variety and scope of the activities of the state university and the historical concepts of its functions constitute a fine dream. But seeing a vision is quite different from building the vision into the actualities of brick and stone and human beings. These things cost money, lots of money, and the question must be raised as to whether we can get the cash.

I hesitate to close this discussion by quoting statistics, especially statistics that make the money we jingle in our individual pockets sound like bird seed. But perhaps the war has made hundreds of millions and billions of dollars less shocking to you if not actually less incomprehensible.

State universities require money for grounds, buildings, and equipment, and for personal services and material things that are needed to operate the enterprise. If our vision of the state university is to continue to grow toward ^{real} reality, we shall have to spend much more money upon these institutions than we are now spending. I do not know actually how much more will be needed to improve the services already offered and to provide new services that are now or will be needed. But for fun let us suggest an increase so large that it will send a chill of horror down the spines of tax payers leagues, chambers of commerce, and other professional savers of tax money, an increase ~~that is~~ so large that presidents and boards of trustees are likely to be shocked into insensibility. Let's propose to double both the amount now invested in capital improvements and the amount now spent annually for current operation. I do not know how much

either of these things amount to for the state universities alone, but the figures for the whole family of public higher institutions are available and we may use them for our purposes.

During a period of approximately one hundred years the value of the lands, building, and permanent improvements of public higher institutions has grown until it now amounts roughly to the magnificent sum of one and a quarter billion dollars. In one hundred years we have accumulated a capital investment in public higher education that altogether amounts to only slightly over one third of ~~the amount that~~ ^{what} we spend annually on furniture -- chairs to sit on and beds to lie upon! Such comparisons could be multiplied many times, but we need not overemphasize the point, ~~that apparently we value our furniture several hundred times more than the housing of our state higher education.~~ Statistically and theoretically failure ~~to wear out~~ ^{during one period of four months} our furniture ~~one day in the year~~ would save an amount equal to the value of the entire one hundred years' accumulation of our public higher educational plant!! Actually, of course, this is not ^{practical} ~~true~~, but the point is still good.

For current ^{day by day} operation of the state public higher institutions we spend in state and federal taxes annually about two hundred millions of dollars. This is almost exactly one-tenth of the amount we spend annually for tobacco in the form of snuff, smoking ^{tobacco} and chewing tobacco. Some day some earnest soul will popularize the slogan, "Spit less and hire a professor." And there are fascinating slogan possibilities in the fact that state and federal taxes for public higher education amount to only one fifteenth of the amount we spend each year for alcoholic beverages. "Save a spree for science." I'll spare you the

comparisons and slogans for chewing gum, the movies and horse races.

~~In all seriousness~~ Doubling expenditures for public higher education would demand no appalling sacrifice of our necessities or even of our comforts. The losses of material and cultural and spiritual values if we fail to provide for an expanded and ever more vital program of public higher education will be appalling. The way will be opened for the gangsters and termites of society that are constantly seeking to satisfy their own greedy appetites at the expense of our ~~culture and~~ ^{institutions and} ~~way of life~~ ^{institutions}. * The state university is more than just another type of higher institution. It is more than an expression of our belief in the values of education. It is more than a symbol of our faith in the capacities of the common man. The state university is the architect and builder of our future.

Comparisons of these lands suggest individual saving for the purpose of contributing by private & group giving to the housing and operation of the state university. It is curious that we have not generally reached a level of civic consciousness & pride which leads us more commonly to honor ourselves by direct gifts to public higher education. It is desirable that we become more keenly aware of such opportunities. But it is not desirable or possible that such gifts take the place of support of the state university by the direct taxation of the whole people. This would be too cheap a price for them to take for their control.

At present fifteen dollars out of each \$500 collected by state taxation in the U.S. is devoted to public higher education. In other words, three per cent of state taxes are used for this purpose. Six per cent would not be beyond the bounds of reasonableness, but continued contributions of the state university to our economic life may easily make it possible to double the dollar unit in double